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ABSTRACT

This handbook has been prepared for the use of literacy practitioners interested in developing strategies for promoting service integration for their clients. The main body of the handbook is divided into three sections. Section 1, Getting Started, gives insight into the initial considerations and planning activities involved in getting started in cross-training. It is divided into these topics: deciding to do cross-training, selecting partners, assessing the need, selecting activities, recording information, and training staff. Section 2, Conducting the Project Activities, explains the implementation of activities in a cross-training project. It includes these topics: kick-off activities, community planning, centralized activities, and supporting networking. Each topic has two sections. A section of general considerations has the following components: description (introduces the topic); keep in mind (provides ideas and issues to consider under this topic); and how to (describes the process for implementation). A section on the experiences of the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL) documents the specific steps that were followed in the MCOL's cross-training project. Section 3, Keeping It Going, discusses how to keep networks active over time. (YLB)

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MAKING CONNECTIONS

A CROSS TRAINING HANDBOOK FOR ADULT LITERACY PROVIDERS

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"The more I learn, the better able I am to help others."
—SOUTH PHILADELPHIA CROSS TRAINING PROJECT PARTICIPANT

FISCAL YEAR 1995-96
PROJECT #: 098-6020

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ____ 2
Introduction ____ 3
How to Use the Handbook ____ 6
Getting Started ____ 7
- Deciding to Do Cross Training ____ 8
- Selecting Partners ____ 10
- Assessing the Need ____ 13
- Example 1—Telephone Survey to Social Service Agencies ____ 15
- Example 2—Mail Survey to Literacy Site Coordinators ____ 17
- Selecting Activities ____ 21
- Recording Information ____ 23
- Example 3—Cross Training Data Entry Form ____ 25
- Training Staff ____ 26

Conducting the Project Activities ____ 28
- Kick Off Activities ____ 29
- Community Planning ____ 31
- Centralized Activities ____ 33
- Example 4—Cross Training Group Identity Exercise ____ 35
- Supporting Networking ____ 38
- Example 5—Sample Directory Page ____ 40

Keeping It Going ____ 41
Conclusion ____ 44
Feedback

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Introduction

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL) coordinates citywide efforts for adults in need of basic skills and serves as an umbrella organization for more than 325 literacy sites. The Commission links adult learners with literacy sites throughout Philadelphia. The MCOL provides information and referral, training and staff development, technical assistance, materials, and technology resources. The Commission continues to heighten public awareness of literacy needs through a variety of public outreach, public relations, and media information dissemination efforts.

Need for Services

Philadelphia is the fifth largest city in the United States, with a population of 1,585,577. In fiscal year 1993-94, 7,928 individuals were enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes. This represents 1.9% of the over-18 year old population who have not graduated from high school. The English as a Second Language (ESL) population is 33,230. Of this population, 3,393 individuals (10.2%) received ESL instruction. Recent national and state surveys show that nearly 50% of adults lack the necessary skills to read, write, and compute at the levels of proficiency necessary to fulfill their roles as citizens, parents, and workers.

Many different measures indicate that adults who have low literacy skills are likely to have additional problems and needs, some of which may present even greater challenges than limited literacy itself. Such problems may include poverty, unemployment, poor health, and substance abuse. Some problems may be the direct result of illiteracy, such as those experienced by an unskilled laborer. Other problems may be indirectly related to illiteracy, such as health problems of an older person who cannot control his blood pressure because he is unable to read nutritional information on food labels and dosage instructions on medicine bottles. In both cases, illiteracy can set in motion a series of events that lead to personal hardship and, in some cases, dependence on others.

CROSS TRAINING TO ADDRESS THE NEED

Through the project entitled "Building a Citywide Network for Literacy Service Providers, City and County Agencies" the MCOL envisioned a system built on established networks that would provide opportunities and encourage all Philadelphians to develop the skills they need to reach their full potential. "An increasing body of evidence suggests that the best approach to assisting individuals with a wide range of needs, including literacy, is through comprehensive, integrated services tailored to the individual and family. However, the integration of services requires extensive collaboration among service agencies and, in many cases, new relationships between providers and service recipients." Reisner, H., (December, 1993). *Adult Literacy Training and the Integration of Human Services.* Technical Report TR93-16, National Center on Adult Literacy, Philadelphia, PA.

MCOL'S CROSS TRAINING PROJECT

During the 1995-96 program year, the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, in collaboration with other literacy and social service organizations in the city, developed an exciting new initiative called cross training. The goal of the project was to coordinate information sharing among service-providing agencies so adult learners could have access to the best possible services. The combination of literacy instruction with human service integration offered important possibilities for enriching both endeavors and thus improving the lives of disadvantaged individuals and families.

The MCOL's project, entitled **"Building a Citywide Network for Literacy Service Providers, City and County Agencies,"** had five objectives. 1) Breakfast Series—sessions for citywide information sharing and network building; 2) Community Meetings—meetings for local network building, information sharing, planning and model development; 3) Cross Training Networking and Resource Exchange—an event for information sharing and dissemination of the community activities; 4) Directory—citywide dissemination of service information; and 5) Handbook—documentation and statewide dissemination of the model. Further information can be obtained from the MCOL by calling 215-685-6602.

This project, which began in July 1995 and was completed in June 1996, provided an opportunity for literacy providers to develop an integrated service system with other social service agencies in the community. Adult learners have lives as

complex as any other adult's, often more complex because their problems are compounded by the need for increased literacy skills and the pain of coping. There are many factors (e.g., child care, health problems) that hinder adults' successful participation in a literacy program and hinder their success in attaining a goal (e.g., recovery from substance abuse, employment).
Three regions of the city were the focus of the project:

- Germantown (19144)
- North Philadelphia (19122, 19121)
- South Philadelphia (19147)

The MCOL cross training model for this project included the following key components:

Breakfast Series—four intensive information sessions revolved around specific themes (i.e., housing, welfare, job readiness/employment, and health, with literacy as a piece of each).
Community Meetings—local community meetings in three regions of the city: Germantown, North Philadelphia, and South Philadelphia.
Networking and Resource Exchange—representatives of each group presented the process and results of collaborative activities between providers at a citywide event.
Directory—descriptions of service providing agencies by area and cross indexed citywide were listed in a directory.
Handbook—recommendations of successful activities for statewide replication.

The target audience for the first four components consisted of the local literacy providers and social service agencies. The handbook allows for statewide dissemination of this model, benefiting all state literacy programs.

How to Use the Handbook

This handbook has been prepared for the use of literacy practitioners interested in developing strategies for promoting service integration for their clients. It was produced as part of a Pennsylvania Department of Education Section 353 grant for 1995-96.

The main body of the handbook is divided into three sections:

- Getting Started—This section of the handbook gives you insight into the initial considerations and planning activities involved in getting started in

cross training.

- ❑ Conducting the Project Activities—This section of the handbook explains the implementation of activities in a cross training project.
- ❑ Keeping It Going—This section of the handbook discusses how to keep networks active over time.

The first two sections are broken down into topics. For example, Getting Started includes the following topics:

- ❑ Deciding to Do Cross Training;
- ❑ Selecting Partners;
- ❑ Assessing the Need;
- ❑ Selecting Activities;
- ❑ Recording Information; and
- ❑ Training Staff.

Each topic has two sections

- ❑ General Considerations.
- ❑ MCOL's Experience.

The General Considerations section has the following components:

- ❑ Description—This will introduce each topic.
- ❑ Keep in mind—This provides ideas and issues to consider under this topic.
- ❑ How to—This describes the process for implementation.

The MCOL's Experiences section documents the specific steps that were followed in the MCOL's cross training project.

We hope you find the handbook helpful in providing ideas for quality services to adults.

Getting Started

Collaboration between literacy providers and the providers of other social services is essential in meeting the wide range of needs of adult learners. For adults to successfully participate in a literacy program, they need support in addressing other issues such as health, housing, and employment and information for dealing with the systems that provide these services. Likewise, knowledge of and ability to access other systems (like adult literacy) is often a prerequisite for adults to meet other needs (like obtaining adequate housing). Collaboration of organizations providing services within a given community is the best way to ensure the seamless delivery of services and the recognition of the full range of needs of adults.

Cross training is a kind of collaboration that brings together providers of varied services to learn more about each other's programs. It is one step in coordinating services to meet the wide range of needs of the adults who are served.

This section of the handbook offers insight into the initial considerations and planning activities involved in getting started in cross training.

The topics examined in this section include the following:

- ❑ Deciding to Do Cross Training
- ❑ Selecting Partners
- ❑ Assessing the Need
- ❑ Selecting Activities
- ❑ Recording Information
- ❑ Training Staff

DECIDING TO DO CROSS TRAINING—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

To serve their clients optimally, literacy providers need to know about existing city/county agencies and to understand the services those agencies provide. Likewise, staff of city/county agencies need to understand literacy more fully. This new knowledge will lead to changes in the ways that agencies do business.

KEEP IN MIND...

- ❑ Changing old ways of doing things is hard.
- ❑ Learning new information is challenging to some and threatening to others.
- ❑ Admitting that we are not providing the best service possible to the individuals with whom we work is difficult.
- ❑ Different work environments have different rules and expectations, both formal and informal.
- ❑ Entering into cross training activities will require an honest assessment of what your agency does well and demonstrate where collaboration with others could enhance what you do.
- ❑ Conversations about cross training need to lead to clarity regarding the impact of these activities on staffs' daily routines.
- ❑ The more staff who can be involved in planning for cross training early in the process, the more ownership there will be.
- ❑ Cross training is a long term commitment.

HOW TO...

- ❑ Identify the relationship of cross training to the mission of the agency.
- ❑ Meet with staff to learn more about the process.
- ❑ Identify how cross training relates to other agency activities.
- ❑ Explore the relationship of community planning to the delivery of adult basic education and literacy.
- ❑ Identify resources that the agency is able to bring to the project.
- ❑ Perform an informal agency analysis of skills in areas of community planning.
- ❑ Openly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the project.
- ❑ Be in touch with like projects. Do some research and read about other successful community based planning activities.
- ❑ Participate in some cross training or community planning activities
- ❑ Clarify all staff members' roles and responsibilities.
- ❑ Keep staff as involved and informed of the planning process as possible.

Deciding to Do Cross Training—MCOL's Experience

The Commission saw cross training as an opportunity to coordinate information sharing among service-providing agencies so adult learners have access to the best possible services. The combination of literacy instruction with human service integration offered important possibilities for enriching both endeavors and thus improving the lives of disadvantaged individuals and families.

The idea for conducting cross training activities first came from a Request for Proposals in which cross training was a priority. In considering whether to submit a proposal for the project, the MCOL considered the needs of the individuals it serves, the agency's current activities, agency resources, and staff expertise. Cross training activities were seen as consistent with the basic elements of the MCOL's mission:

- ❑ To improve and expand the Philadelphia Literacy Coalition;
- ❑ To integrate educational resources and technology into literacy programs;
- ❑ To reach out and link new learners and tutors;
- ❑ To promote public policies and public support for literacy;
- ❑ To serve as a resource to literacy centers.

It was felt that the project would specifically support the goals of improving and expanding the Philadelphia Literacy Coalition and serving as a resource to literacy centers.

Once the MCOL made the decision to proceed with cross training, the Commission planned a project aimed at bringing together the staff of literacy, social service, and community organizations to achieve the following goals:

- ❑ Exposing various social service agencies to the nuances of the world of the adult literacy learner;
- ❑ Instructing literacy providers about the services available from the many agencies who play a role in the life of the literacy learner;
- ❑ Providing better support for educationally disadvantaged adults who may be using services from all of these organizations.

SELECTING PARTNERS—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Initiating a cross training project single-handedly seems like a contradiction in terms. An advantage in working in partnerships is that each agency can share its strengths and build on the strengths of others. Also, collaboration increases the chances that there will be a structure within the community for ongoing activities.

KEEP IN MIND...

- ❑ Forming partnerships takes time.
- ❑ Collaborative activities involve give and take and do not always lead where one expects.
- ❑ Partnerships need to make sense to all involved.
- ❑ Each partner needs to have something to bring to the partnership (e.g., an established presence in the community, financial resources, space).
- ❑ Each partner needs to get something out of the project (e.g., literacy needs to be a concern for adult basic education providers, health issues or housing for others).
- ❑ Collectively, the partners need to have the skills and resources necessary for the project to succeed.
- ❑ There needs to be clarity about the roles and responsibilities of all participants.
- ❑ A wide range of resources usually can be tapped (e.g., people, events, publications) for supporting and promoting projects.

HOW TO...

- ❑ Meet with staff of potential partner agencies to learn more about each other.
- ❑ Identify agencies' current activities in their communities.
- ❑ Clearly identify the relationship of the project to the mission of each agency.
- ❑ Openly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of collaborating on the project.
- ❑ Identify resources that each party is able to bring to the project.
- ❑ Identify the roles and responsibilities that each party would assume.
- ❑ Visit and participate in events of potential partners.
- ❑ Identify organizations in the city that are already working on developing linkages in the community (e.g., family centers, empowerment zone, United Way).
- ❑ Decide how to present literacy as a pressing issue among community activities.
- ❑ Explore the relationship of community-based planning to the delivery of adult basic education and literacy.
- ❑ Keep those participating informed of the planning process.

Selecting Partners—MCOL's Experience

In the initial phase of the project, the MCOL recognized that community efforts were already under way in many areas and decided to work with three existing community level projects rather than create another community entity. This redesign enabled the project to build on and strengthen existing efforts. It also provided a framework for activities to continue after the funding for the cross training project ended.

For each activity in its project the MCOL sought partners. Collaboration with community groups was essential because the MCOL is not itself community based. In selecting the three community groups to work with, the MCOL needed to choose among three options:

1. Sections of the city with well-established public/private collaborations that had identified literacy as an issue. In this case, the MCOL would build on the existing activities.
2. Sections of the city that had public/private collaborations under way but that had not clarified community issues. In this case, the MCOL would attempt to help participants realize what their needs were and to make literacy a pressing issue for that community group to adopt.
3. Sections of the city that had only begun public/private collaboration activities. In this case, the MCOL would help in the development of such a structure, including presenting literacy as a pressing issue.

Project staff gathered information about numerous sections of the city and the structures that were in place in each. They identified organizations in the city that were already working on developing linkages in the community. The staff consulted a range of sources and met with various individuals and community groups from different sections of the city to learn more about their community activities in order to make the final selections for collaborations. In the end, three regions were selected that were at different stages of the community planning process:

- Germantown (19144)—this area already had established public/private collaborations in the Public/Private Systems Integration Initiative (PPSII). The project staff contacted PPSII and involved the organization's members.
- South Philadelphia (19147)—this area had several public/private collaborations but none had set goals. The family center at Palumbo

School was selected as a hub for project activities and various community groups, individuals, and organizations were contacted to be brought into the project.

- North Philadelphia (19122, 19121)—this area had not begun public/private collaborations for the community. The project staff contacted OIC, which is located in the north central area, and began to identify, develop, and build linkages in that area.

Working with three groups at different stages of community-based planning provided the MCOL with a range of experiences. In light of the fact that cross training is a part of the later stages of the community planning process (*Building Communities for Learning: Strategic Plan for Community-Based Planning for Adult Basic and Literacy Education*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania), working with the most established collaborations brought faster and more focused results. However, working with groups that were just getting started enabled the MCOL to contribute the most to the community and learn the most from the process.

Assessing the Need—General Considerations

Before beginning cross training activities, it is important to assess the needs of the individuals in the community to be served. It is also important to identify the resources that are available to meet those needs, especially those resources that have an established presence in the community.

Keep in mind...

- ❑ Remember to include both volunteers and paid staff of programs.
- ❑ Contact recipients of services.
- ❑ Remember that people have limited time.
- ❑ Be prepared for refusal to provide information or for unconventional responses.
- ❑ Contact various social service organizations that provide various levels of expertise.
- ❑ Contact organizations that represent the diversity of the area.
- ❑ Invite individuals to participate in the project even if they have no information to contribute to the needs assessment.

How to...

- ❑ Decide what information you need and how you will collect, record, and organize it.
- ❑ Identify the individuals to include in your needs assessment.
- ❑ Develop a process for collecting the needed information.
- ❑ Test the process and revise it if necessary.
- ❑ Think about the audience for your inquiry and ask specific questions that pertain to their roles.
- ❑ Identify who in an organization has the information you want.
- ❑ Have the same person or team work on the collection of information.
- ❑ Recognize that you may need to make more contacts than you originally expected.
- ❑ Keep good documentation of all collected information. Even unsolicited information might be useful at a later date.
- ❑ Be sure to gather complete information about participants and their organizations.

ASSESSING THE NEED—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy used a series of surveys to assess the needs of adults in literacy and other social service programs. The MCOL surveyed both social service and literacy providers to obtain information on services needed and used by the individuals they served as well as to identify possible project participants and activities. The agencies contacted represented various social service organizations and provided various levels of expertise. The MCOL used both mail and telephone surveys and follow-up calls to respondents on specific issues to gather the information.

For literacy providers, the questions posed on the mail survey and in the additional telephone calls were to help determine the educational services and social needs of their clients. Human service agency survey respondents were asked to identify barriers to or reasons why clients might not participate in adult education programs (e.g., child care needs, transportation needs, health care problems) and which programs their clients participated in when they were seeking services.

The information in the surveys was used to select topics and resources for the Breakfast Series and to identify literacy and other social service providers interested in participating in the project. The survey also provided initial information for creating a database and eventually a directory.

The following pages show examples of surveys used to gather information from literacy service providers and social service agencies.

Example 1—Telephone Survey to Social Service Agencies

Date: _____

CROSS TRAINING TELEPHONE SURVEY TO SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES
Mayor's Commission on Literacy

Name of Organization _____

Name _____ Position _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ Fax# _____

Region: North Germantown South Philadelphia Other: _____

Type of Service: Health Education Housing Labor Welfare Other: _____

(Hello, the MCOL is involved in a special project on cross training... at this point refer to one page description of project for explanation.)

Do you have 5 or 10 minutes to talk about information relevant to clients who participate in other social services? ❑ yes (Go on with the survey.) ❑ no (Thank you for your time!)

1. What programs do your clients participate in? Possible prompts include: counseling, education programs, job training, housing, shelters, health programs, welfare...(See if they can identify specific agencies and their locations.)

2. What services do you have difficulty with identifying in your area? Possible prompts: Health Education Housing Labor Welfare Other/Specifically: _____

If adult education is not identified in question #1 then ask question #3. If they did identify literacy services skip to question #4 and continue with questioning.

3. Do any of your clients participate in adult education programs? ❑ yes ❑ no

Example 1—Telephone Survey (continued)

4. Please identify the literacy program(s)? Also note locations if possible.

5. Are there certain barriers/reasons why some of your clients may not attend adult literacy programs? Possible prompts include: child care needs, transportation needs, health care needs...

6. Have you participated in any other types of cross training? ❑ yes ❑ no

7. The MCOL is planning to do cross training. Would you be interested in attending some cross training sessions? ❑ yes ❑ no

OR you may want to ask if there is another person from the agency who may want to receive information about the cross training.

THANK YOU!

18

Example 2—Mail Survey to Literacy Site Coordinators

Site Coordinator Survey

Name of site: _____

Name of coordinator: _____

Please check the area(s) your site serves:

- ❑ West and Southwest Philadelphia
- ❑ North Philadelphia, Frankford, and Kensington
- ❑ Northeast Philadelphia
- ❑ Germantown, Logan, Olney, West Oak Lane, and Roxborough
- ❑ Center City, South Philadelphia

Which programs do you offer at your sites?

❑ ABE ❑ ESL ❑ GED ❑ Other: _____

Demographics

1. How long has your site been operating? _____
2. About how many learners each year does your site serve? _____
3. About how many tutors work in your program each year? _____
4. Do you have a fax number? _____
5. Please estimate the percentages of your learners' age categories and gender:

___ 16-25 ___ 26-35 ___ 36-45 ___ 46-55 ___ 56+

___ male ___ female

6. Please estimate the percentage of learners who do not have a high school diploma _____
7. Please estimate the percentage of learners who have less than an eighth grade education _____
8. Please estimate the percentage of learners on public assistance _____
9. Please estimate the percentage of learners who are unemployed _____
10. Estimate the percentage of minorities:

___ Black ___ Hispanic ___ Asian ___ Other

11. Estimate the percentage of your learners receiving assistance from other agencies:

___ homeless shelters
___ women's shelters
___ drug rehab
___ alcohol rehab
___ other _____

___ counseling therapy
___ legal services (required)
___ legal services (requested)
___ child care
___ other _____

Example 2—Mail Survey (continued)

NETWORKING

We would like to know more about your networking techniques both within your site and within the community. These questions will give us an idea about the background of communication and networking that the site coordinators possess prior to cluster meetings.

12. How often do you meet with your tutors or teachers? _____

13. Do you meet with them: (individually, as a group) (formally, informally)

14. What are some of the issues that come up at these meetings?_____

_____

15. The networking at your site is...(please check one)
    a. ❑ not very good because there isn't enough time.
    b. ❑ not very good, it's something I've been meaning to work on.
    c. ❑ not very good, the tutors don't communicate very well.
    d. ❑ ok, it needs a bit more structure, but we are getting there.
    e. ❑ ok, we communicate one on one, and I take care of things as best I can.
    f. ❑ great, communication is well organized, and we're a strong network.
    g. ❑ other: (please specify) _____

16. Do you and your tutors agree on any particular educational philosophy? _____

_____

17. Are your tutors evaluating and assessing their learners? ❑ Yes ❑ No
    If "Yes," try to describe method, program, or philosophy.

_____

_____

18. In a survey of literacy tutors conducted by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy in 1993, two thirds of tutors said they would like more training after basic tutor training. What kinds of training would your tutors like to attend?

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

19. How often do you use the services of the Mayor's Commission on Literacy?

_____

20. Were you aware that the MCOL has a directory of sites that can be used to find other sites in your area? ❑ Yes ❑ No Have you used the MCOL directory services? If so, what did you use it for? _____

21. Do you communicate with other site coordinators in your area? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If "No," would you like to communicate with other area site coordinators? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Example 2—Mail Survey (continued)

If "Yes," how and why do you communicate with other site coordinators?

_____

22. Do you conference with, use the services of, or network with other agencies that are not direct education service providers? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If "Yes," what agencies do you work with? _____

Resources

These questions are designed to find out your organization's resource capabilities.

23. What is the biggest struggle that you have right now at your site?

_____

24. What is the best attribute of your site right now?_____

25. Would you be willing to share your successes and struggles (questions 23 and 24) with others in your area? ❑ Yes ❑ No

26. Have you used Reader Development Program resources? ❑ Yes ❑ No If "Yes," how often do you use them? _____

27. Are you currently on the mailing list for any of the following newsletters:
- ❑ MCOL's *Read On*
- ❑ PA Department of Education's *What's the Buzz?*
- ❑ *LRC Newsletter*
- ❑ *The Reader*
- ❑ Other (please specify): _____

28. Does your program receive Pennsylvania Department of Education funding? ❑ Yes ❑ No

29. Has your organization written for a grant and received it? ❑ Yes ❑ No If "Yes," please give some details about your most recent grant: _____

_____

30. What kinds of services do you offer your tutors? (please briefly describe and list average frequency)

workshops _____

staff development _____

referral system of other agencies _____

resource library or file _____

social gatherings _____

tutor support _____

tutor recognition _____

Example 2—Mail Survey (continued)

learner support _____

learner recognition _____

ISSUES

What kind of things could be best addressed at an open meeting to discuss how you and your tutors could grow to affect the services provided to your clients?

31. What kind of social issues keep coming up that need to be addressed by either the site coordinator or the tutors?

❑ abuse ❑ homelessness ❑ racism ❑ welfare ❑ child care ❑ sexism

others _____

32. What kinds of training do you think are necessary AFTER the initial site coordinator training?

❑ organization ❑ tutor/learner retention ❑ fundraising ❑ tutor recognition
❑ site evaluation ❑ tutor/learner recruitment ❑ community networking
❑ other _____

33. What kinds of guides, handbooks, materials, resources, etc., would you like to see the MCOL make available to site coordinators?

- ❑ keeping track of tutors and learners
- ❑ fundraising ideas and possibilities
- ❑ networking with your tutors (recognition)
- ❑ networking with your learners
- ❑ networking with other site coordinators in your area
- ❑ directory of other kinds of agencies
- ❑ educational tools on various topics (assessment, math, computers, etc.)
- ❑ others: _____

34. Your learners have asked their tutors for... (Please check all that apply and note anything specific in the space below. This will enable us to better compile a resource directory for you.)

Life Skills
- ❑ mental health resources
- ❑ physical health resources
- ❑ psychological health resources
- ❑ chemical dependency
- ❑ welfare aid resources
- ❑ parenting skills
- ❑ legal help

Enhancing Skills
- ❑ college/vocational resources
- ❑ GED registration
- ❑ job training
- ❑ job placement
- ❑ learning disabilities

others: _____

22

Selecting Activities—General Considerations

Cross training is part of community-based planning. Activities should be designed to help support the information sharing and network building that are necessary for successful community-based planning. These activities can occur at a citywide or local level or in any combination of the two.

Keep In mind...

- ❑ Involve partners as early as possible in the planning process.
- ❑ Consider the wide range of activities that the community planning model will lend itself to.
- ❑ Clarify why partners plan to participate and what activities interest them.
- ❑ Include activities that provide opportunities to network and exchange ideas.
- ❑ Recognize the tension between planning and action and help the group find a balance between these.
- ❑ Include group activities such as advocacy.
- ❑ Be ready to change to respond to the group's needs.

How to...

- ❑ Early in the project, create an activity that brings everyone together to form a basic sharing of knowledge and basic level of understanding.
- ❑ Encourage group members to plan project activities.
- ❑ Survey participants to identify topics that interest them.
- ❑ Help people identify activities that meet their agency's and clients' needs.
- ❑ Find space and a location that is appropriate for the activity.
- ❑ Consider holding meetings at the sites of participating agencies.
- ❑ Structure activities to establish leadership for community ownership.
- ❑ Evaluate activities to determine progress and revise plans.
- ❑ Provide the opportunity for discussion of local issues and concerns.
- ❑ Combine project activities with other activities and events taking place in the designated communities.

SELECTING ACTIVITIES—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

(This is intended as an overview of how the MCOL planned its cross training activities. The actual logistics of how these activities were carried out is discussed in later sections of this manual.)

As discussed under Deciding to Do Cross Training, above, the MCOL's project was developed in response to a Request for Proposals. Many of the project activities were identified during the writing of the proposal. An attempt was made to provide a fair amount of structure to the kick off activities in order to get the project moving in the right direction. A series of four structured seminars was planned in a central location for this initial phase. However the selection of the topics for the seminars was based on the participant surveys.

The second phase of project activities for participants was planned to support the emergence of community ownership of the local planning process. The structure and content of these meetings was determined by the participants. The one exception to this was that the MCOL worked to keep literacy on the agenda. This did not pose problems as had been feared because each of the groups identified literacy as a pressing issue in their community.

The last participant phase was planned to bring participants back together at a centralized meeting to present the community-based plans they had developed. It was hoped that this would allow other community groups to learn about and begin community-based projects of their own. Since the project was successful in supporting the emergence of leadership in the community groups, the nature of this centralized event was redefined.

While the initial planning of activities was done by project staff, as the participants took increasingly greater ownership of the project, the activities became more participant-driven. This required making changes in planned activities. However, turning over the leadership of the project to the participants was consistent with the project goals and increased the chances that the planning groups would continue when direct funding for the project ended.

Two additional activities which mainly involved staff were the creation of a directory and the development of this handbook. The directory was planned as a loose-leaf document to serve as an ongoing resource for participants. Participants evaluated a draft of the directory and their suggestions were used for making changes for the final version. The handbook was planned to allow other literacy service providers to learn from the experiences of the MCOL. It has been a totally staff-driven activity.

Recording Information—General Considerations

Information needs to be collected to coordinate and track project activities. This information will be used for identifying and contacting participants, for tracking needs and resources, for documenting cross training activities, and for enabling participants to network among themselves.

Keep in mind...

- ❑ Information needs to be collected to support many aspects of the project.
- ❑ Identify as many of the possible uses of information as you can.
- ❑ Include as much of the anticipated information as possible.
- ❑ No matter how well you plan your collection system, needs will be identified as the project develops that will require making changes.
- ❑ Project information is useful only if it is accurate.
- ❑ Collecting, recording, and maintaining information is time consuming.
- ❑ Think ahead and plan the ways you will want to present the information.

How to...

(Since the MCOL used an electronic database to record its information, this section includes the "How to" for this type of system.)

- ❑ Clarify the purposes for developing a database.
- ❑ Plan your database as thoroughly as possible from the start:
  - consider all the possible information that will be collected,
  - think of all the possible uses for the information.
- ❑ Select software that:
  - allows you to document all the information you want to collect,
  - enables you to generate products you will need (e.g., reports, lists),
  - creates a database that can be developed and maintained by staff.
- ❑ Review existing documents for ideas of what and how to collect data.
- ❑ Develop a system for recording information.
- ❑ Identify individuals and agencies for inclusion in the database.
- ❑ Have an individual who is knowledgeable of the project goals and of the database collect the information.
- ❑ Contact individuals or agencies by mail and then by telephone about inclusion in project activities and the database.
- ❑ Ask every new contact for additional contacts.
- ❑ Verify all information in writing if possible or at least by telephone.
- ❑ Test the database early on and regularly to see if it:
  - is storing the information you need,
  - can generate the products that you need (e.g., reports, lists, labels),
  - is accurate.
- ❑ Maintain the database throughout the entire project.

RECORDING INFORMATION—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

The MCOL chose to use an electronic database to collect information. This is a good choice because it can store and generate reports on project participants and activities, create lists and labels, and become the basis for a directory to enable participants to network among themselves. The MCOL used FileMaker Pro because it was user friendly, could be maintained by staff and adapted to meet project needs as they emerged, and was able to perform the range of functions that the project required.

An initial format was developed to accommodate the information from the survey contacts. Additional information for the database was collected at all project activities, including Breakfast Series sessions, Community Meetings, and the Cross Training Networking and Resource Exchange.

Revision of the database was an ongoing process. For example, after information from the surveys was entered, it became apparent that the survey respondents were not necessarily the individuals who we wanted to contact within the agencies regarding other project activities, so contact person information was gathered and entries for other individuals at the same organization was saved. Maintenance of the database was also an ongoing process because new participants became involved throughout the project. Even after all project activities were over, agencies that heard of the directory continued to call to inquire about being listed.

Many of the decisions and revisions that were needed in the database were related to the creation of the directory. These are discussed under Supporting Networking, below.

Using an electronic database to collect information allowed the MCOL to track project activities, communicate with project participants, and generate a directory to support ongoing networking among participants.

The following page shows a sample of the data entry form from the database the MCOL used to gather information about the participants in the cross training project.

Exampie 3—Cross Training Data Entry Form

DATA ENTRY FORM

Whole Name (including special title):

Last name

Organization:

title
- ☐ Mr.
- ☐ Ms.
- ☐ Dr.
- ☐ Reverend
- ☐ Sister
- ☐ Mrs.
- ☐ Councilperson

Program Name:

Building Address (including Rm #)

Address:

City/State

Zip

Breakfast Series Attendance
- ☐ north
- ☐ south
- ☐ germantown

1/24 ☐
1/31 ☐
2/7 ☐
2/14 ☐

Acronym
Telephone
Fax Number

type of contact
- ☐ executive
- ☐ city contact
- ☐ regional contact
- ☐ other

Region Served
- ☐ Germantown 19144
- ☐ North Central 19121/19122
- ☐ South Phila. 19146
- ☐ ALL
- ☐ Other

Mail Received:
- ☐ NIFL/XTraining
- ☐ First General Mailing
- ☐ Pamphlet1/Let
- ☐ Pamphlets234/Memo
- ☐ All Pamphlets/let

Reprint/Label:
- ☐ Reprint Letter
- ☐ Make New Label

Entry Date:

Regional meeting participants
- ☐ North 2/20, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/16, 4/30, 5/14
- ☐ Germantown 2/21, 3/6, 3/20, 4/3, 4/17, 5/1, 5/15
- ☐ South 2/22, 3/7, 3/21, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2, 5/16

EIGHT REGIONAL MEETINGS
- ☐ #1 ☐ # 5
- ☐ #2 ☐ #6
- ☐ #3 ☐ #7
- ☐ #4 ☐ #8

Attendance May 29,1996 -
Res. Exchange

TRAINING STAFF—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important that the staff for the project be prepared for project activities and receive the proper support and training because they are the front line people who participants will be dealing with. The form of this training will depend on a number of factors, including the availability of information (e.g., handbooks) explaining the demands of project activities, the number of and expertise of existing staff, and the financial resources available to pay for training.

KEEP IN MIND...

- ❑ Clearly define the project goals and responsibilities so that everyone is on the same page.
- ❑ Clearly define the role of staff in this project to ensure comfort in carrying out the project responsibilities.
- ❑ Staff should be knowledgeable of and familiar with communities, groups, and other projects happening in the designated areas.
- ❑ Staff members with the most time aren't necessarily the best persons for this project.
- ❑ Staff need an understanding of and interest in community planning.
- ❑ The best training resources and information might come from within staff.
- ❑ Be flexible and prepared to switch gears in the middle or slow down the process when necessary.

HOW TO...

- ❑ Research the skills needed to conduct the project.
- ❑ Identify staff or outside resources for that expertise.
- ❑ Attend community planning meetings.
- ❑ Practice skills, for example the facilitation skills of reflecting discussion, identifying issues, clarifying purpose, and addressing concerns.
- ❑ Think ahead and be prepared for ideas, questions, and activities not planned for in that specific time or meeting.
- ❑ Prepare for consistency throughout the project to allow you to evaluate outcomes. On the other hand, be willing to discard plans to meet the needs of the group.
- ❑ Use planning meetings for ongoing training, support, and constant evaluation of the process.
- ❑ Get feedback from the community participants.
- ❑ Keep a journal or log of experiences and activities.
- ❑ Document observations and reflections as part of a regular process of training, planning, and evaluation.

Training Staff—MCOL's Experience

The staff of the Mayor's Commission on Literacy was new to cross training, in fact, most were new to community-based planning. *Building Communities for Learning: Strategic Plan for Community-Based Planning for Adult Basic and Literacy Education,* (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1995) and *Adult Literacy Training and the Integration of Human Services.* (Technical Report TR93-16, National Center on Adult Literacy, Philadelphia, PA, 1994) provided helpful background information. However, we had difficulty finding a good manual on how to actually carry out activities.

Training became an ongoing team process. When staff would meet to plan a specific activity, part of the planning process became identifying the skills needed for the activity to be successful. Training needs also were identified during debriefing sessions after project activities. Staff expertise related to needed skills was identified. In some cases, the staff member with the skill assumed responsibility for the activity. In other cases, that staff member provided training for the other project staff.

Over time, staff began providing training as needed to project participants to enable them to assume leadership roles in activities. Likewise, staff learned many skills from the participants that they were able to use to improve project activities.

Looking back on the project, more time should have been spent on training. However, it still remains a question where that training expertise would be found and to what degree the necessary skills could be identified and developed only through conducting the project.

CONDUCTING THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Frequently organizations are isolated and services are fragmented. Collaborations that do exist are often limited in scope within one sphere of service. This does not support adults' needs to access a wide range of services. Other times there is coordination between specific individuals or agencies. This is effective as long as those individuals or agencies continue in their existing roles but often ends when there is any change in players involved.

Cross training institutionalizes the exchange of information among agencies and their staff members. It establishes a formal system for ongoing collaboration through the following activities:

- ❑ Developing a forum to gather and share information;
- ❑ Identifying needs that are not being met for individuals in the community;
- ❑ Developing a strategy to work together to meet those needs.

This section of the handbook explains the implementation of activities in a cross training project. The following topics will be examined in this section:

- ❑ Kicking Off the Project
- ❑ Community Planning
- ❑ Centralized Activities
- ❑ Supporting Networking

Kicking Off the Project—General Considerations

An initial activity (or activities) will introduce the project, to help participants develop a shared body of knowledge, provide focus, and build enthusiasm for project activities. If more than one community group will be working on the project, centralized events will work well as initial activities. This enables forums to be planned with experts who can speak on topics and their implications on the community level as well as in a broader context (e.g., the city, state, or national level). Centralized events also help community groups to see that they are part of a larger movement that is going on in a number of areas of the city.

Keep in mind...

- ❑ A centralized event can help in publicizing the project and in providing background information for future activities.
- ❑ The kick off event should be one that attracts individuals who are interested in continuing in the community planning portion of the project.
- ❑ The location of the kick off event should be accessible to potential members of the community groups.
- ❑ Centralized events allow for citywide as well as local networking.

How to...

- ❑ Plan an event that responds to the needs and interests identified in the needs assessment.
- ❑ Use the kick off event as an opportunity to provide an overview of project activities.
- ❑ Provide information so that participants can build a common body of knowledge and begin to identify issues and topics to pursue further as a group.
- ❑ Get the word out through a variety of community channels.
- ❑ Plan the activities to involve the participants as much as possible.
- ❑ Allow time for participants to work together in groups to begin to network and develop a group identity.
- ❑ Allow time for informal networking.
- ❑ Have space appropriate for the range of activities that the event involves.
- ❑ Provide participants with follow up information after the event.

KICKING OFF THE PROJECT—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

The MCOL began the project with a Breakfast Series centrally located in Philadelphia. There were four intensive information sessions that revolved around specific themes that were identified by survey respondents: housing, welfare, employment, and health. Each session also had a component on education/literacy to accompany the theme. These sessions provided background information and began a dialogue among a wide variety of agencies.

Each session occurred in the morning and lasted for two hours. The day started with the opportunity to network. At 8:30, the session began with a brief introduction of the project and the panel. Presentations, approximately 10 minutes each, were made by three or four local experts on the identified topics. Each session had an individual on the panel who presented an overview on the topic, someone who highlighted services in the specific area, and one panelist who connected the topic with literacy/education.

After the panel presentation, the audience broke into groups by community. The session then continued with a small group discussion activity. These groups were facilitated by the MCOL staff. The participants identified concerns and needs related to that day's topic. In lieu of a question and answer session, the presenters from the panel discussion circulated around the room to lend information and to answer questions that the groups raised.

Community Planning—General Considerations

Local planning invites collaboration on topics relevant to a particular geographic section of the city. Through community based planning, groups identify local needs and issues and develop plans to address these. Groups pool existing resources and research additional resources through ongoing communication and networking activities.

Keep in mind...

- ❑ Community planning takes an initial investment of time. Payoff is not immediately apparent. In fact, the first year might not produce much obvious success, but it will lay the groundwork for action in continuation of the project.
- ❑ Cross training needs to be in the context of community planning.
- ❑ Planning and action need to be supported as they emerge naturally.
- ❑ Agendas for meetings need to be flexible enough to accommodate large or small turnouts and to address the inconsistency of attendance.
- ❑ Timelines are good planning and monitoring tools, but groups need flexibility
- ❑ Recognize the group's skills and resources.
- ❑ Establish long-term goals, identify barriers and planning strategies, and the next steps for the group to move ahead.
- ❑ Provide time and opportunities to recognize accomplishments.

How to...

- ❑ Define your purpose and roles from the very beginning.
- ❑ Be clear about the definition of community planning and cross training.
- ❑ Establish common ground—trust is the second stage in community planning.
- ❑ Spend adequate time getting acquainted—possibly visit participating members' own organizations, sites, and programs.
- ❑ Always allow time for personal networking.
- ❑ Be clear about what each person or agency wants to get out of the meetingss.
- ❑ Consider rotating meetings among sites. This distributes ownership and creates a deeper comfort level and better understanding of services.
- ❑ Balance planning and sharing so that a direction emerges.
- ❑ Allow time for identifying solutions to issues and strategies to address issues.
- ❑ Be mindful of continued interest and commitment—move from discussion to action when things seem to be lagging or are weighed down.
- ❑ Work together as a group to identify activities.
- ❑ Consider subgroups if some individuals are interested in pursuing an activity that does not interest others.

COMMUNITY PLANNING—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

In the second phase of the project, participants met in their neighborhoods to develop community plans and explore issues. Area literacy providers, learners and the local representatives from social agencies were invited to share information and identify how to best facilitate services in their sections of the city.

The community groups met eight times for 2 1/2 hour meetings. Each facilitator planned the agenda to explore topics identified by each group. Activities were planned to establish trust, build networking skills, identify resources, establish long term goals, identify barriers, and plan strategies and next steps for the group. Some of the methods used during these sessions included the following activities:

- Group discussions,
- Brainstorming,
- Presentations,
- Guiding questions,
- Reflective activities.

To help inform this process, the group reviewed the notes from the Breakfast Series. Each group discussed the three stages of the process for community based planning:

- Getting together,
- Building trust,
- Developing a strategic plan.

Many of the community partners wanted to move participants toward advocacy. To address this issue, advocacy ideas were incorporated into the planning strategies. Presentations and activities were incorporated. For instance, at one Germantown meeting a class of learners was invited to a meeting to hear information on welfare rights, and the attendees decided to take subsequent actions (i.e., letter writing campaign in their classroom).

Representatives from each community group came together to discuss the work of their group and to plan how to present their activities at a final Networking and Resource Exchange, discussed under Centralized Activities, below.

Centralized Activities—General Considerations

Coming back together as a large group from time to time is a way to introduce new information into the local planning processes, reestablish citywide networking, refocus on project activities, and reenergize groups to continue their local efforts. As leadership emerges in the local groups, it is good to encourage these individuals to become involved in planning and facilitating centralized activities.

Keep in mind...

- ❑ Community planning is hard work. Events can recognize groups' accomplishments and refocus their energies.
- ❑ Centralized activities provide a good opportunity for new information and ideas to be presented.
- ❑ Groups might want to use these opportunities for evaluating their work and/or presenting it to others.
- ❑ Centralized events are a good way to get the word out and interest new groups in community planning and cross training.
- ❑ Surveys and focus groups can be used at centralized events to get a feel for how cross training is going overall.

How to...

- ❑ Bring groups together periodically to further citywide networking.
- ❑ Involve participants in the selection of activities.
- ❑ Use the event as a time to celebrate success, refocus energy for future activities, and involve new groups in cross training.
- ❑ Allow plenty of time for discussion, networking, question and answer sessions, and small group discussions.
- ❑ Encourage a variety of activities, with different formats, and different lengths of time. Information sessions, question and answer sessions, hands on activities, and networking fairs are some examples.
- ❑ Vary the activities that you use to bring groups together. Different activities bring out different individuals.

CENTRALIZED ACTIVITIES—MCOL'S EXPERIENCE

The Cross Training Networking and Resource Exchange was both the culminating activity for this project under existing funding and a way of trying to get the groups committed to continuing their activities and to interest new groups in becoming involved in the process. The event featured presentations from each group about their collaborative planning. There were also exhibits and demonstrations from various service agencies and focus group sessions. A draft copy of the directory was available for feedback.

The initial plan was for representatives from each group to present their cross training models. However, participants felt that while they accomplished a lot in a short amount of time, their plans were still "works in progress." They felt that they had made the effort to get together and had built trust but did not have enough time to develop a strategic plan.

Instead of focusing on preparing a model to present at the Networking and Resource Exchange, the participants chose to place their limited time and energies on developing a plan to remain a group and to have meetings. They stated that the meetings helped them develop new methods of thinking. They recognized they needed to think deeper about issues and be more creative in their collaborations.

To help the areas to focus on what they had gained from their meetings and where they wanted to go, each group designed a shield with five sections using words and/or symbols to represent certain aspects of the group. Each shield depicted the name of the group, a logo for their community, a description of their cross training experience, a description of the role of literacy in their community, and a description of their vision for their community.

The illustrations on the following three pages show the shields that each group produced.

Also that day, the participants participated in a focus group discussion about the community meetings, responding to the following questions:

1. Why did you participate in the community meetings?
2. What did you gain from these meetings?
3. If you could change something about the community meetings, what would you change? Why?
4. Did the community meetings give you an opportunity to identify, discuss, and plan around the issues in your community?
5. What are your plans to continue to learn and plan for your community?

Example 4—Cross Training Group Identity Exercise

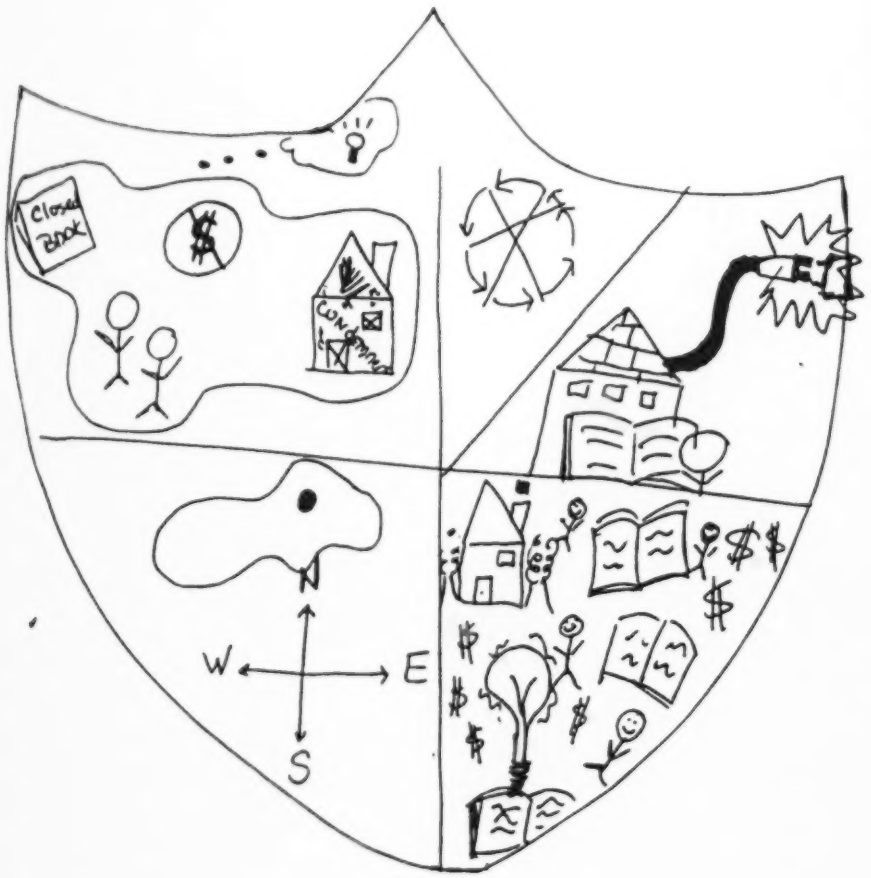

Illustration Key—North Philadelphia Group

① Name of the group
② Logo for their community
③ Description of the role of literacy in their community
④ Description of their cross training experience
⑤ Description of their vision for their community

Example 4—Cross Training Group Identity Exercise (continued)

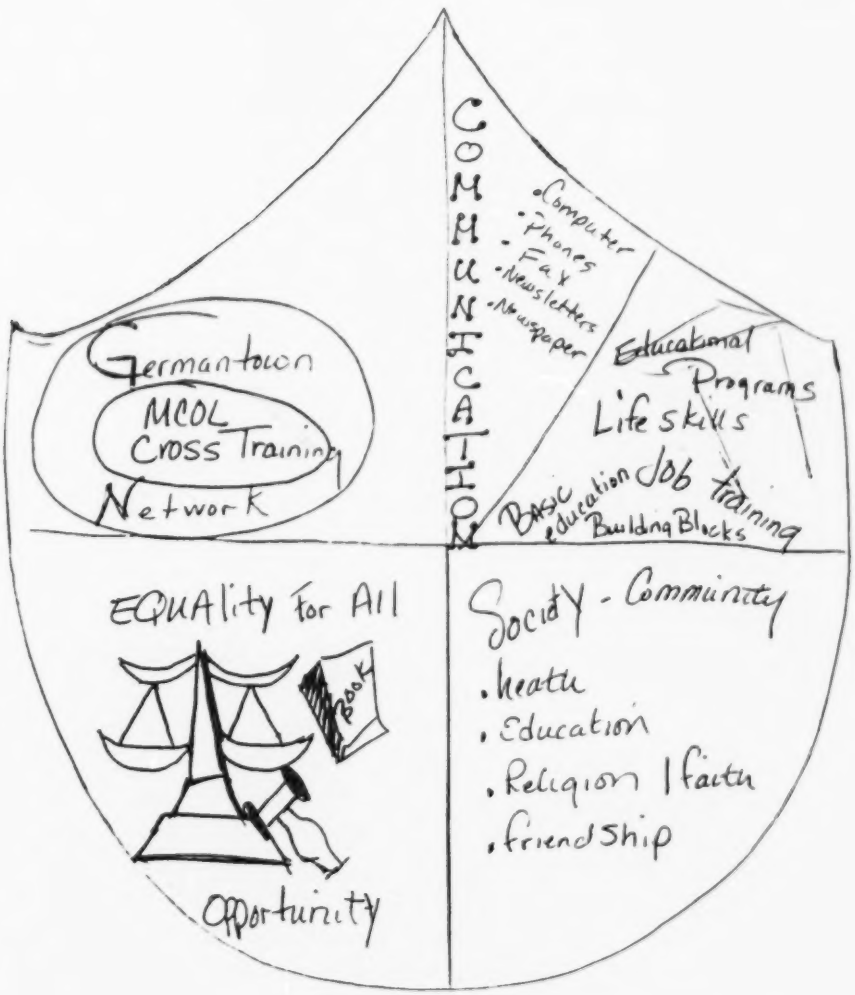

ILLUSTRATION KEY—GERMANTOWN GROUP

① Name of the group
② Logo for their community
③ Description of their cross training experience
④ Description of the role of literacy in their community
⑤ Description of their vision for their community

Example 4—Cross Training Group Identity Exercise (continued)

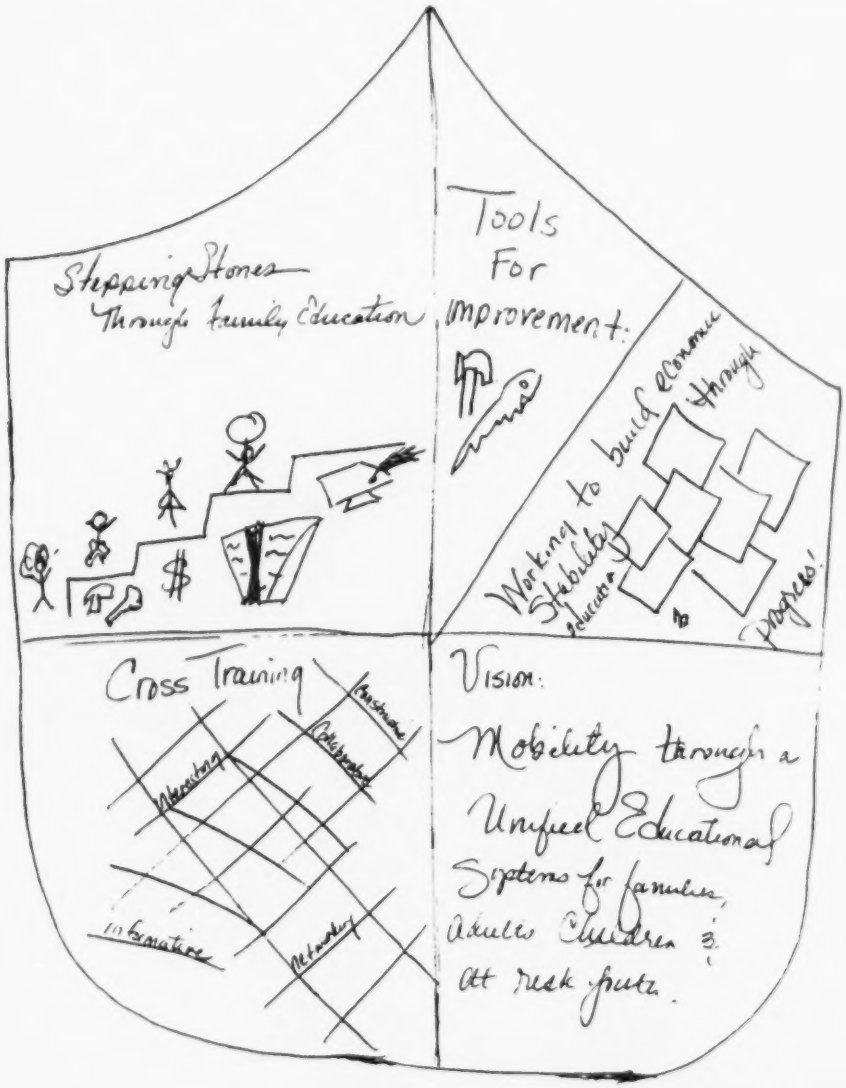

ILLUSTRATION KEY—SOUTH PHILADELPHIA GROUP

① Name of the group
② Logo for their community
③ Description of the role of literacy in their community
④ Description of their cross training experience
⑤ Description of their vision for their community

SUPPORTING NETWORKING—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the greatest strengths of cross training is in the networking that it builds. This supports the ongoing exchange of information through formal and informal channels. It also leads to relationships between agencies that allows them both to build on each other's strengths and relationships between individuals that allow them to be more successful and therefore more fulfilled in their role of providing services.

KEEP IN MIND...

- ❑ Cross training is basically about networking.
- ❑ Networking can happen in formal and informal ways.
- ❑ Some people find networking extremely hard. Explore different ways to network (e.g., by phone, over lunch, by e-mail) to help individuals find ways that work for them.
- ❑ The more the group members network among themselves the more cross training will occur and the stronger the group will become.
- ❑ Keep track of contacts as networks grow because they can grow very large very quickly.

HOW TO...

- ❑ Create the right environment for networking in project activities.
- ❑ Encourage people to talk about various types of networking activities.
- ❑ Select projects that require networking. Have individuals or groups work on the project and report back on the results of their networking activities.
- ❑ If participants are comfortable with the idea, share participant information on lists or in directories.
- ❑ Encourage individuals to take risks by networking with someone that they would not usually connect with.
- ❑ Recognize networking activities that happen spontaneously during activities.

Supporting Networking—MCOL's Experience

The MCOL developed a way to support ongoing networking among participants. The directory describes all participating city/county agencies and literacy service providers. It is indexed alphabetically, by area, and by type of service.

The information for the directory was collected over a nine-month period in the electronic data base described under Recording Information, above. A blank layout from the data base fields became a form for people to submit information for inclusion in the directory.

Two mailings went out to agencies requesting information for the directory. Information was gathered at the Breakfast Series and the Community Meetings. The Commission printed 100 draft copies, which were distributed at the Networking and Resource Exchange. Feedback was received and revisions were made.

All agencies listed in the directory were sent forms to fill out. Decisions were made about how to interpret the information that was submitted. Follow up telephone calls were made to verify information in question. In the end, the decision of how an agency was represented in the directory was made by an appropriate representative of the agency. For example, there were agencies that historically have been listed with the MCOL as a site where adult basic education services are provided who chose not to indicate that they provide educational services on site. Likewise, there were organizations best known for the provision of other services who chose to be listed in the directory for their educational programs.

Editing of agency descriptions was also questioned. We questioned whether the directory would be easier to use if the descriptions were in a similar format. In the end, we used the description as submitted, thereby maintaining the individual character of each agency's description.

Example 5 on the following pages shows the form (with fields for data entry) that the MCOL used to compile its Cross Training Directory.

Example 5—Sample Directory Page

Cross Training Directory

Organization:

Building Address (including Rm #)

Address:

City/State | Zip

Program Name:

Executive Director: Executive Director:

Contact Person: Contact Person:

Telephone Number: Telephone Number: **Fax Number:** Fax Number

Contact Person's e-mail Address: Contact Person's E-Mail Address

Agency Description:

Cost for Services: Cost for Services:

Agency's Service(s)

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Multi-Service
- ☐ Other:

Other

Region Served

- ☐ Germantown 19144
- ☐ North Central 19121/19122
- ☐ South Phila. 19146
- ☐ ALL
- ☐ Other

42

Keeping It Going

As difficult as it can be to start projects, sometimes it is even more of a challenge to sustain them. Shifting priorities, staff turnover, changes in funding, and day to day demands can get in the way of committing energy over time to continue collaborative activities. While on one hand we see progress toward goals and the positive effects of integrated services, on the other hand we see the constant and often growing needs of the adults we serve. Continuing collaborative activities is important for agencies to stay in touch with the scope of services available, for professionals to maintain their perspective on the situation, and for services to adults to be of the highest quality possible.

Planning is crucial to keeping cross training activities alive. In addition to planning to address immediate needs, groups need to plan for how they will sustain their activities over time. Realistic expectations about the amount of time individuals can commit or the amount of progress the group can make in a given period of time is essential. It is also important to take time to reassess the group's vision and goals. Throughout the process, an attempt should be made to keep communication open and to resist the temptation to avoid controversy, so that the group can continue to change with its members and its community.

As the community meeting portion of this project was drawing to a close, each group made a decision about whether they wanted to continue these meetings and if so developed the plan for future meetings. When the project began each group was at different levels of development and organization (see Selecting Partners, above). At the end of the project, each group came to a different decision about the future of the community meetings.

Germantown Plan

The Germantown group recognized the importance of this cross training project. They decided that they wanted to continue to meet two or three times a year. The group members also discussed ways to keep in touch and recognized that going online would be one way to do that. They stressed the need to help literacy providers develop the activities and resources to deal with issues in individuals' lives in the context of literacy teaching. One of the cross training participants developed activities, strategies and ideas to address this need. The group felt that the MCOL should continue this role of developing lesson plans/ curricula and strategies to help teachers integrate social and political issues into literacy education.

NORTH PHILADELPHIA PLAN

This group chose to continue regular community meetings. They recognized that they needed to build better communications among the various agencies. They spoke about using online access via LibertyNet (a local Internet access) to help with that issue, perhaps setting up a listserver for that purpose. The group planned to continue to meet with MCOL staff assuming a leadership role. This group identified key issues to address.

1. Addressing the whole person. The need to address multiple dimensions in people's lives—not just literacy.
2. Connections between levels of schooling and generations. Links between K-12 and adult education; many adult learners are parents.
3. Connecting literacy to individual and community concerns. Making learning relevant and connecting literacy to work, advocacy, and technology.
4. Motivation and participation. Sustaining involvement and understanding barriers to participation.
5. Goal setting and planning for the future. Assisting in goal setting and planning.

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA PLAN

The South Philadelphia group decided to keep in touch and continue their community meetings. They wanted to have local meetings at various literacy agencies on a rotating schedule. Participants felt that rotating the meetings at various literacy sites would build a cohesive network of service providers in South Philadelphia. It also would encourage collaborations and the pooling of resources. Participants also felt that it was important to see what other sites were doing. One site agreed to host the next meeting and lead the initiative. They would like to continue the meetings and are looking to the MCOL to help coordinate them.

Group members summarized what critical literacy issues need to be addressed in their community. Community participants identified five areas for development.

1. Literacy and job training sites in South Philadelphia with curricula that include life skills.
2. Staff development opportunities.
3. Continuation of the Breakfast Series to help broaden the diverse commitment to cross training.

4. Opportunities for collaborations in grant writing and the sharing of resources.
5. Establishment of a good communications network.

It is also important to look for opportunities to extend project activities. This might involve including new components or resources in continuing cross training projects or initiating new cross training projects in additional communities. Different projects will develop differently. Build on the experience and success of past projects, but do not rule out the possibility of going in different directions or doing things in new ways. For cross training to be successful, the activities need to be responsive to the unique needs of different communities and to the changing needs of communities over time.

CONCLUSION

The Commission has found that links to other social service agencies are important for providing quality services to our clients in adult education. The need for cross training as one type of linkage is clearly evident. Many literacy programs and social service support programs remain isolated and fragmented. Often, collaborations are formed but, typically, only within one sphere of service. The cross training project brought together social service staff, community services staff and literacy providers to explore common issues and strategies necessary for serving each client holistically.

Many people took advantage of this cross training opportunity. The adult literacy service providers and social service agencies in Philadelphia responded positively to the initiative, as demonstrated in their evaluations and focus group comments. The tremendous response encountered through this project indicated that agencies all around the city wanted to obtain information on current issues affecting their clients and to seek new opportunities for collaborations.

While the project is completed, many of the participants continue to look to the MCOL to support the collaborative process among service providers and the community based planning process. The MCOL has strong convictions about helping the community groups maintain the connections that have been developed over the past year and will be providing another Breakfast Series for FY 1996-'97 and will be an active participant in the community planning that continues. Also, the MCOL is developing collaborations with organizations to help spread this model to other sections of the city.

Feedback

The Mayor's Commission on Literacy would appreciate knowing how this handbook helped you and how we can make future revisions more useful. To accomplish this task, we have included an evaluation form below. Please take a minute to answer the questions. Thank you!

What areas of this handbook were most helpful? Why?

✂CLIP AND MAIL✂

What areas of this handbook were least helpful? Why?

What additions or changes would you make to this handbook?

How has using this manual changed your view about cross training? About community planning?

What other related resources have you found useful for cross training?

Other comments?

CLIP AND MAIL

Your name: _____

Your organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone number (including area code): _____

Please mail, fax, or e-mail this form to:

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48